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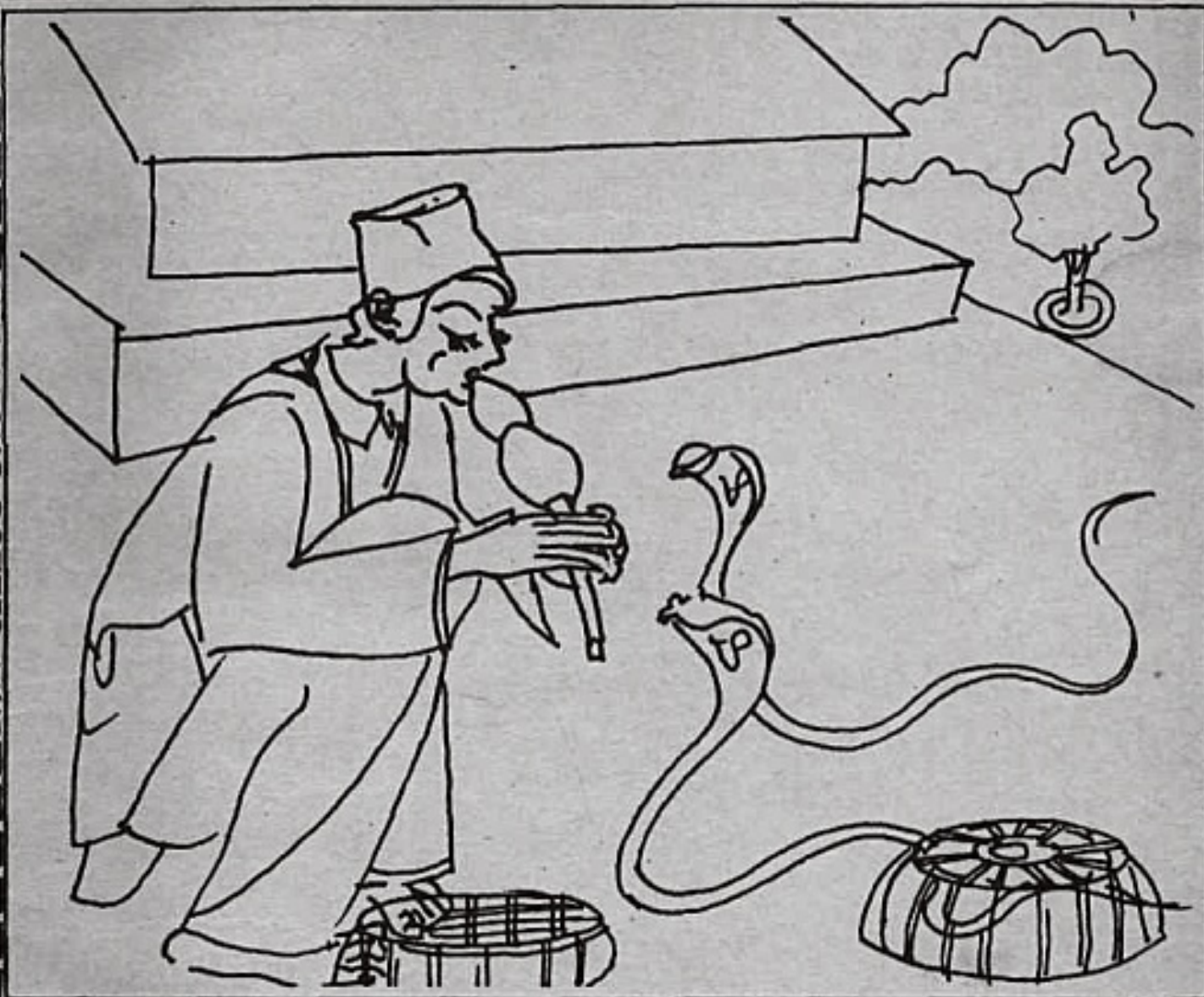


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Shri B. L. N. PRASAD

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For all those who knew him, PRASAD was just not a name to identify an individual, but a synonym of dignity blended with decorum, brilliance steeped in tenderness.

As the eldest son of Shri B. Nagi Reddi, he had been Providentially placed in a position where converged numerous institutions founded or piloted by his father. He performed his cardinal role not only with ability, but, what is unforgettable, with a touch of human splendour.

Still young in life, his soul chose a lone journey beyond.

Forever shall we miss him.

CHANDAMAMA

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- THE UNKNOWN LOT OF 1857 :** Homage to those who sacrificed their lives unknown and unsung, for their country ... *Page 54*

PLUS NINE STORIES AND SEVEN OTHER FEATURES.

GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE

यो ध्रुवाणि परित्यज्य अध्रुवाणि निषेवते ।

ध्रुवाणि तस्य नश्यन्ति अध्रुवं नष्टमेव च ॥

Yo dhruvāṇi parityajya adhruvāṇi niṣevate

Dhruvāṇi tasya naśyanti adhruvaṁ naṣṭameva ca

One who ignores the reward that is certain for the sake of chasing an uncertain reward, he loses both the certain and the uncertain.

The Panchatantra



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Controlling Editor: NAGI REDDI

THE UNKNOWN LOT OF 1857

In our series, *They Fought for Freedom*, we have told you about some of the leaders of the great Mutiny of 1857. They were heroic patriots and they fell for a great cause. The nation should remember them gratefully for ever.

The world abounds in petty people busy in petty deeds. They cannot give us any inspiration. Nevertheless, they can influence us—influence us to remain petty like themselves—pursuing small selfish ends, quarrelling and competing for worthless rewards. Luckily there are examples set by greater people—examples that can inspire us to rise above pettiness. There is a noble joy in remembering the good and the great, those who stood for some high ideal and did not mind dying for it when necessary.

But many among such noble souls would not care to be remembered. They struggled for a great cause; that was satisfaction enough for them. They would hardly mind if nobody took note of their sacrifice. In this issue we pay our homage to such unknown heroes of 1857, in the article in the series, *They Fought for Freedom*.

THREE PRINCESSES

II. One Giant Meets His End

(The three princesses hit upon a novel plan to trick the giant. They proposed to perform a dance to entertain him. The giant agreed. While he remained engrossed in the dance, one of the sisters revived the three brothers who had been turned into stones.)

The three princesses and the three brothers were happy at outwitting the giant. But they could not rest in peace. It was not safe for the three brothers to change into swans and dwell in the lake. The giant knew too well the number of swans. In fact, he counted them every day.

What was to be done? They discussed many possibilities, but nothing seemed to be foolproof.

"Listen to me, brave young men, you have done enough for us. We feel immensely grateful to you. However, we should be very sorry if misfortune befalls you on our account. Please leave us to our destiny and forget us. Go back to your home and live happily," said Subhasini.

Udayan smiled and said, "Thank you for your suggestion, O kind-hearted princess, but we cannot accept it. Now our

destiny is not different from yours. If die we must, let us die together. But we are not going to resign ourselves to such a fate very easily."

There was a silence for a while. Then one of the brothers said, "Can't we put an end to the giant?"

"We can, provided we have some help from the other young men who are in the lake as swans," said another brother.

"Very well, we can request the giant to permit all his prisoners to participate in the dance programme!" said Subhasini.

It was decided to try this possibility.

When the giant was accordingly requested by the three sisters, he said, "If that would mean a better performance, why not!"

The time for the dance came. At Subhasini's asking, all the

swans came ashore and turned into the youths that they really were. The youths who for a long time had had no chance to take their human forms, danced most enthusiastically. Stealthily the three brothers mingled with them. The giant who was engrossed in enjoying the dance could not see through their plan.

Suddenly, when the giant had closed his eyes, Udayan unsheathed his sword and with one stroke cut down his head. The head rolled on and was lost in the lake giving a portion of the water a reddish hue.

To everybody's amazement,

along with the death of the giant his castle disappeared. But the statues remained as they were.

"No time to waste," said Subhasini. "We must bring those statues to life."

They sprinkled the magic water on the statues and changed them into human beings. They wept with joy and shed tears of gratitude while thanking the three princesses and the three daring brothers.

Udayan suggested that the captive princes depart for their respective kingdoms forthwith. But the princes were reluctant to accept his advice. "How can we go away leaving you in this



dangerous place? Besides, the dwarf wizard is there to check us. We might fall into yet another predicament if he finds us out. Better we wait here, changing into statues again, until all has become well."

As the princes insisted on this, the three brothers were obliged to turn them into statues once more.

Before they had the time to think of their next course of action, they heard a hissing sound. Next moment the second giant was seen descending as a vulture, rapidly assuming his real shape. Instantly all the captives jumped into the lake

and became swans.

That day the giant had brought with him a new prisoner, another princess whom he hurled into the lake. Then standing on the bank, he began counting the swans. With the new prisoner he expected the number to rise to 48. But he was amazed to see that the number reached 51. He counted twice and exclaimed, "What a fool I am! I did not know that I had already got more prisoners than I needed!"

But next moment he had some doubt. In a stern voice he ordered the swans to come ashore. They obeyed him and



became human beings.

"Who among you were added last? Answer me or I shall put all of you to death here and now."

Sensing the giant's mood and realising that he meant business, the three brothers stepped forward.

"We have voluntarily joined the group of your prisoners. Now, we demand to know, what right have you to harass these innocent young men and women? Allow us to lead them away peacefully or you too would meet your brother's fate!"

"My brother's fate? Why, what happened to my brother?" The giant roared out his demand. The three brothers laughed.

"What a fool you are not to notice that your castle had disappeared!" observed one of the brothers.

The second giant looked at the ground where the castle used to stand. He was perplexed. His red round eyes betrayed awe and anger. He ran around statues and then returned to the bank of the lake. By then the three brothers had climbed the strange mango tree. Before the giant's eye, they took bites of the mangoes and became monkeys. The giant



jumped and ran madly in his bid to capture them, but the three naughty monkeys kept on evading him successfully. Once or twice they even scratched him.

"Wait and see how I punish you!" yelled the giant. Then he changed into a vulture and took off for some unknown destination.

Soon thereafter the dwarf wizard reached there. In the monkeys he could recognise the three brothers.

"Don't think that you can escape the giant's wrath easily!" he said.

Next moment one of the



monkeys jumped onto his shoulders. Another took hold of his beard and began pulling it from a high branch. The dwarf wizard soon found himself hanging from the branch while two of the monkeys hung from his legs.

"Oh! oh! I die of pain. Obviously you know all the magic and miracles of this enchanted place. It was foolish of me to come here. Please release me. I promise never to harm you," cried out the dwarf wizard.

We won't let you go so easily. Promise that you would serve us instead of the giant and would surrender your magic pro-

perties to us. Otherwise you remain suspended like this till you meet a painful end," chattered out the monkeys.

"I agree to serve you!" said the dwarf wizard.

The three brothers revived their human forms. Udayan relieved the wizard of his magic string of beads and put it on himself. Instantly the wizard became a man of normal stature while Udayan grew into a dwarf. Udayan also took charge of the magic powders and the magic towel which were with the wizard.

The three brothers then asked the swans to come up. As they reached the shore they became human beings.

By virtue of the magic towel the three brothers produced plenty of fruits—and a large variety of them. They enjoyed a happy feast.

While they were in a relaxed mood there were signs of the second giant's return. The captives jumped into the lake. Udayan sprinkled the magic powder on Kumar, Nishith and the wizard, making them invisible. Himself looking like the dwarf wizard, he stood ready to welcome the giant.



The giant was happy to see Udayan whom he mistook to be his wizard-servant.

"Where are those three monkeys?"

"I have done away with them," said the disguised Udayan.

"Really? let me have a glimpse of their dead-bodies," said the giant gleefully.

Udayan led him towards a well and directed him to look

into it. As soon as the giant leaned forward, his head drooping, Udayan drew his sword and beheaded him.

But, to his utter disgust he saw another head popping up on the giant's neck.

"What! you had the audacity to do this?" shrieked out the giant. Then he picked up Udayan and tossed him into the deep well.

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THE BURIED SECRET



Who was the greater musician—Pan or Apollo? The two gods had a quarrel on this question, each claiming to be superior to the other.

King Midas volunteered to judge. He declared Pan the greater. "Your ears cannot hear better than an ass!" blurted out Apollo.



Back in his palace, looking into his mirror, Midas was horrified to see that his ears had become like those of an ass.



Midas used a long cap, covering his ears. But he could not hide them from his barber.





This barber promised to keep his knowledge a secret. But, in the long run, feeling impatient, he dug a hole and spoke into it, "King Midas has an ass's ears!"

He, of course, filled up the hole, but, there grew up a bunch of reeds. They swayed in the breeze and muttered, "King Midas has an ass's ears!"



Birds who heard them chattered the words in the locality. The amused people gossiped about it. The king became the object of ridicule for all.



King Midas confined himself to his room. "Why did I go to judge between the two gods?" he regretted.





CITY IN THE SEA

Once some people fled from the advancing army of Attila the Hun. They decided to settle on the mud-banks where they had taken refuge—and so began the story of Venice.

"It didn't look as good as it does in pictures!" This is an all too frequent comment on many of the world's most visited cities. But nobody ever says that about Venice. The little island with its bell towers, canals and black-painted gondolas (long narrow boats) may well be the most photographed city on earth, but it still remains a man-made marvel worthy of a visit.

In Venice waterways take the place of roads, and Venetians use motor launches instead of cars, and gondolas in place of taxis. Magnificent houses, centuries old, stand with their doors facing a mooring. Turn off the busy main canals, and you will make the discovery that Venice is criss-crossed by a maze of much smaller waterways.

What are the reason for this unique example of towns planning? Nature made it necessary in the first place.

Then, in A.D. 452, Attila the Hun swept across the land,

looting and burning the peaceful towns and villages. Those who could, fled before the invaders. Those who lived near the sea sought safety in the only place that was left to them, the mud banks amid the lagoons.

Fortunately for them, Attila died the following year. With Attila dead, there was no reason why the refugees should not return to their old homes.

But a certain spirit of independence must have prompted the men and women who had settled in the middle of the lagoon to stay where they were, and over the centuries their descendants painstakingly manufactured a miracle: a city constructed on 118 miniature islands, separated by some 160 canals!

The early Venetians realised that it was impossible to sink ordinary foundations in mud, so they drove huge wooden piles down to the clay. Although they probably did not realise it at the time, it was in fact the quicksand that bore the weight of

their city.

Venice grew swiftly. While invasions and internal feuds kept the mainland in a state of chaos, more and more people fled to it from the coast. The fishing from the mud banks had always been good, but it was from Crusaders on their way to the Holy Land that Venice grew rich. The knights and their followers needed transport, and the Venetians, with their knowledge of the sea, were the men to provide it.

Soon Venice was acknowledged as the port where East and West met, and her traders and adventurers were known all over the world.

But the Venetians were involved in a series of ruinous wars when the Turks overran Constantinople and the Byzantine empire. By the 17th century Venice was better known for her artists than her power, and in 1886 the once great city-state became just another part of a united Italy.

Today, one can trace Venice's rich past from her buildings. Nearly everything is remarkable from the magnificent Piazza San Marco (St Mark's Square) and the palaces that line the Grand Canal to the centuries-old homes

of simple fishermen. It would be easy to say that the city itself is an enormous museum if it were not for the fact that it is so obviously alive! A quarter of a million people go about their business there, fishing, making glass, lace and jewellery, besides catering for crowds of tourists.

At first sight, Venice looks unbelievably permanent. Unfortunately this is not so. A hundred years ago there had been a high flood. And now the city is slowly sinking, as the clay on which it is built loses its elasticity and the massive wooden piles rot away. Some say that Venice is disappearing into the lagoon at the rate of more than two centimetres every five years.

A further threat to Venice comes from the Venetians themselves, some of whom are not particularly interested in preserving the city as one of the wonders of the world. They would prefer to see it modernised, even to the extent of draining the broad Grand Canal and turning it into a road! Faced with the double threat of man and nature, Venice will be lucky to survive.

TOPPING THE LIST

Once a trader from a foreign land met the king of Koshala and offered to sell him a horse. It was an excellent horse. The king was pleased to buy it for a thousand gold coins.

"My lord, we should place order with this trader for more horses of this type," proposed the minister.

"Do so if that is wise," said the king. The minister placed an order for a hundred horses and gave one lakh gold coins as advance to the trader. The trader promised to return in a year.

A few days later the king asked his court-jester to make a list of the greatest fools in his kingdom.

The jester submitted the list the next day. Topping the list was the minister's name. But against his name was written : "To be confirmed in a year."

"What do you mean?" asked the king.

"My lord, the trader will never return. The minister who gave him a lakh of gold coins will be proved a fool," replied the jester.

"If the trader returns?" demanded the king.

"In that case the trader's name will take the place of the minister's name," replied the jester.



A Hole in the Throne

In a certain town in ancient Israel lived a poor young man called David. His wife knew the art of making tasteful sweetmeats. David sold the sweetmeats hawking them in different areas of the town.

One day he entered a lane which he had never visited before. A little boy played before a lovely mansion. David offered him a sweet and the boy relished it so much that he gave out a cry of joy. That attracted his nurse's attention. She paid David the price of the

sweet.

David came there the next day too and sold a few sweets to the boy who was the son of a wealthy landlord. Soon it became a regular practice with David. He visited the lane daily. The boy continued to buy his sweets.

One afternoon, before David had reached the landlord's mansion, a servant of the neighbouring house cajoled him to come in and meet his master. David was led to the presence of an old man who lay on a divan and



looked rich.

The old man picked up a sweet from David's basket and threw it into his mouth. "Excellent!" he exclaimed. And he paid David a gold mohur.

David was so surprised that he could not speak.

The old man laughed and said, "Surprised with one mohur, eh? I shall give you fifty if you obey me!"

"What is your order?" asked David growing curious.

The old man did not put it straight. He hemmed and hawed and in many words put forth a sinister proposal. David should mix a deadly poison in a sweet and pass it on to the landlord's son. The old man was the landlord's enemy.

David shuddered with annoyance. "Sorry," he said, "I cannot do such a thing."

"Not even for a hundred gold mohurs?" asked the old man with a sneer.

"Not even for a thousand!" answered David.

"I see," smiled the old man as he patted David on the back. "Young man, I praise your honesty. But I must say that you are talking like a fool. You are not killing the boy! I am doing it. You are only acting



as my servant for a price. Think again. I promise you two thousand gold mohurs. This is my last bid."

"No, no, no!" shouted David with vehemence and he stood up.

"Then you die!" said the old man calmly. "I cannot let you leave my house once you have known my mind."

At the old man's order his servants took hold of David and locked him in a room on the roof.

David wept and cursed his captor. But the stone walls showed him no sympathy.

Slowly it grew dark. Des-



perately David climbed to the small opening the room had—like a skylight—and peeped out.

Suddenly the stone under his hands gave away, thanks to the old age of the building. The opening became big enough for him to escape from the dungeon into the terrace.

But what next? All was dark. He could not make out how very high the terrace was. Even then he took a risk. He jumped down.

He had little idea that he was jumping from the fourth storey! He would have fallen to his death had it not been for a cart loaded with hay that happened

to be parked on the road. He dropped on the hay and, after a little while, ran along the road that led to his house on the other end of the town.

His wife was anxiously waiting for him.

“What made you so late? What happened to your sweet basket?” asked the lady.

“Thank God that I have returned alive!” said David and he narrated his bizarre encounter with the old man.

Tears streaming down her cheeks, his wife thanked God again and again, first of all for her husband’s honesty and courage, and then for his providential escape.

It was the practice with David to buy some flour at the end of the day, with his day’s earning. His wife prepared a loaf and they shared it.

But that day not only had David failed to bring the flour, but also he had forfeited his basket to the wicked old man.

“We must go without food tonight,” David told his wife.

“But I must light our oven. Otherwise our neighbours will think that we have nothing to cook,” said the lady and she lighted the oven.

A few minutes later a woman

from the neighbourhood came to their house for a firebrand.

"Take from the oven," said David's wife.

The woman went in and shouted, "What a lovely loaf! But it is already ripe for taking out!"

Greatly surprised, David and his wife rushed into their kitchen. Indeed, the loaf that lay baked on their oven was something the like of which they had never seen! It was big and of enticing colour. The flavour it gave out was delightful.

After the woman of the neighbourhood had gone, David and his wife looked at each other. They sat down to offer their gratitude to God for the miracle. Then they enjoyed the most delicious loaf.

"How kind is God! He saved you from death and gave us food too!" observed David's wife.

"Indeed, and how happy I shall be if God gives me some wealth!" said David.

"Is he not giving us what is good for us even without our asking for it? Why should we demand anything?" asked his wife.

"Well, if I got something precious, say a ruby..."

David had not ended his sen-



tence when plop came down a ruby from the roof! It was as big as it was luminous.

David sat speechless with ecstasy. A long time passed.

"Let us pray and go to sleep," he said at last.

No sooner had they fallen asleep than David's wife dreamt that she was in heaven. At one place she saw many beautiful thrones arranged in a fine array.

"Who will occupy these thrones?" she asked an angel.

"The brave and the just ones of the earth," answered the angel.

"Is that so? In that case a throne must have been reserved

for my husband!" she observed shyly.

"There it is!" said the angel pointing at one of the thrones.

A close look at the throne showed that it had a hole in its seat.

"Why has my husband's throne got a hole?" she queried.

"It is the ruby that made the hole. It fell cutting through it!" replied the angel.

The lady woke up. She shook David up and narrated her dream to him.

David reflected on it for a long time. "I realise that it was foolish of me to demand a ruby from God. I wish it went back to its source!" So saying

David hurled the ruby upward. It disappeared.

In the morning he thought it wise to go and warn the landlord against the old man's murderous design.

But while passing the old man's house he saw a crowd. The old man had died at night. In fact, he had died of shock at the discovery that his prisoner had escaped!

Even then David informed the landlord what had happened. The landlord was so happy that he rewarded him with ten thousand gold mohurs.

David and his wife lived happily and lived long.

(Adapted)



UNCLE LUDDOO HAS A FREE RIDE

Uncle Luddoo once got into a coach. "Take me to the river-bank," he ordered. It was evening.

"The fellow has not bargained with us. We will demand of him double the fare," the coachman told his companion who sat by his side. The two spoke in a language which, they were sure, Uncle Luddoo did not understand.

But Uncle Luddoo understood!

The coach drove on. The river-bank was a furlong away when Uncle Luddoo shouted, "Stop, please!"

The coach halted.

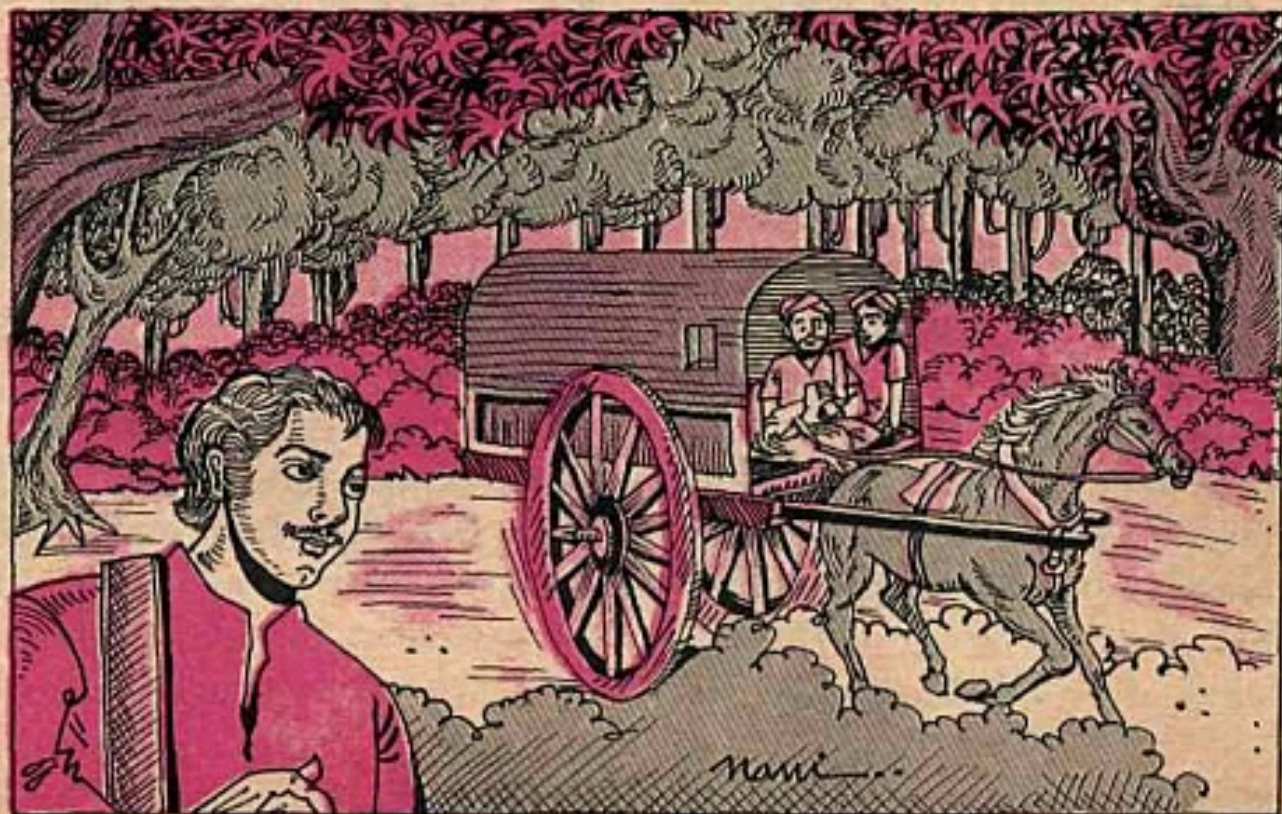
"Do you have a match-box?" Uncle asked the coachman while getting down.

"Yes, but why?"

"My gold ring slipped off my finger and went under the seat," said Uncle, feigning anxiety.

The coachman and his companion looked at each other. Suddenly the coachman whipped the horses and disappeared from Uncle's sight as fast as he could.

Uncle Luddoo enjoyed a hearty laugh as he walked to his friend's house on the river-bank.



A SECRET KASHI IN THE HIMALAYA



“Jai Kedarnath!”—Glory to Lord Kedāra!—shouted a batch of pilgrims who were returning from Kedarnath.

Ravi and Raman who had been seen always chattering between themselves or whispering to each other, had fallen silent. The charm of the Kedarnath valley through which they were driving took their breaths away!

The faces of those pilgrims, some of whom were pretty old, beamed unusually bright. They heard that many of them had trekked for miles to see the numerous holy spots situated at different and difficult areas.

“They must be very sturdy!”

commented Ravi.

Said the smiling Sadhu, “Not necessarily. Many of them would swoon away at half the hardship at home. It is the spirit of the pilgrimage that keeps them fit. Man has so much power hidden in him! When he is inspired, the hidden power comes to the surface.”

They had travelled twenty kilometres from Rudraprayag and had reached a bazar called Agastamuni.

“Surely, this place has nothing to do with Sage Agastya! He lived in the south,” observed Raman, and he added proudly, “His ashram was not far from my home.”

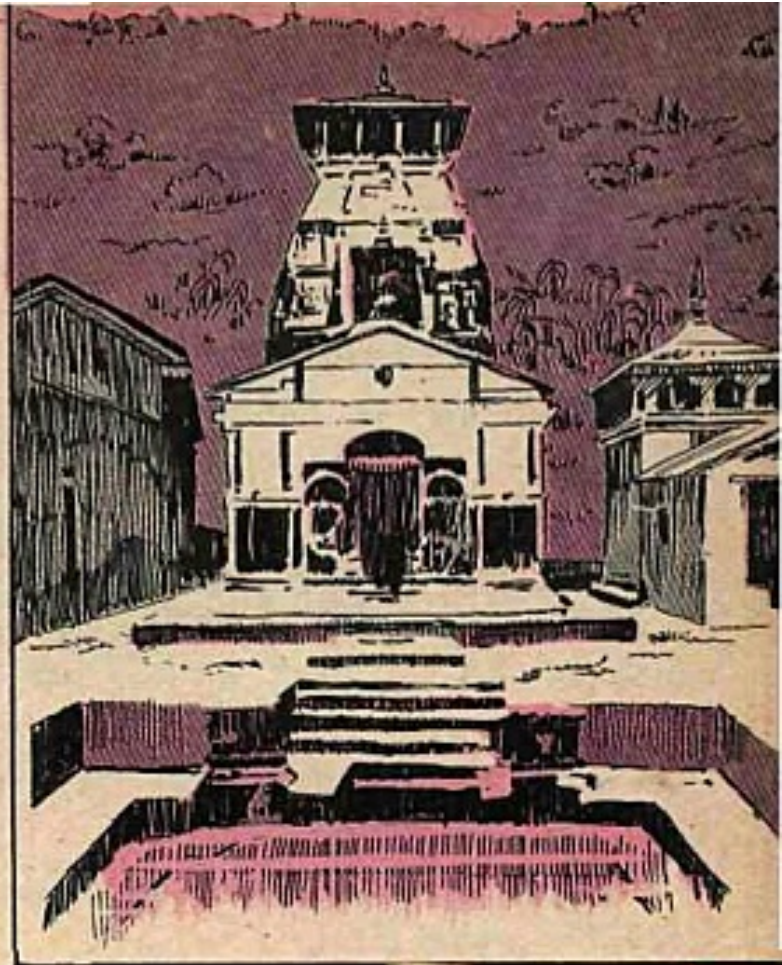
“You are wrong as well as right,” said the sadhu. “This place bears the memory of Sage Agastya. He was here. But he was also in the south—not only near your home—but also at several other places. He trekked all the way from the Himalaya to the farthest parts

of the south, solving so many kinds of problems for so many people. He is, indeed, one of the most fascinating personalities in the mythological history of India," said the sadhu.

"What a great traveller he was!" commented Raman.

"He was a great lover of the country and a great lover of humanity. For your information, he never returned from the south. It happened this way: the sun circles Mount Meru in the process of the celestial rotations. Once the Vindhya mountain demanded that the sun circle him too! The sun said that he was bound by a certain law and he could not do otherwise. The Vindhya, angry with the sun, began growing higher and higher in a bid to block the sun's passage. The gods requested Agastya to tame the Vindhya, for, the great mountain was his disciple. Agastya began his southward journey. When he reached the Vindhya, the mountain bowed down to him, shrinking in the process.

'Remain in this position till I cross you again on my return journey,' said the sage. But he never returned. He continued to dwell in the south. The Vindhya remains shrunk; the



sun moves about free.

Agastya crossed the Vindhya on the 1st day of the month of *Bhadra* in the Indian calendar. For a long time people hesitated to set out on a journey on that day. A journey begun on that day was called *Agastyayatra* and it was believed that the traveller might not return home!"

Through the lush greenery of the tree-clad hills flowed the river Mandakini, one of the three prominent tributaries of the Ganga, the other two being the Alakanada and the Bhagirathi.

Blue was the water of the Man-

dakini—her stream sometimes moving calmly and sometimes flowing in foaming torrents.

Soon they reached Guptakashi—at a high of 4,850 feet. Charming was its setting, with two ancient shrines—one of Chandrashekhar Mahadev and the other of Ardhanarishwar.

Sunset was approaching. Against the serene sky flashed a snow-clad sublime peak—reflecting the mellow beams of the setting sun.

“It is a divine sight!” exclaimed one of the pilgrims.

“What is the name of this peak?” asked Ravi.

“Nilakantha—that is one of the names of Lord Shiva. Once the poison emitted by the mighty

serpent Vasuki—who was used as the rope for the churning of oceans by the gods and the demons—was going to destroy all life on the earth. Shiva came to the rescue of all. He swallowed the entire poison. His throat grew blue,” said the Sadhu.

“But why is this place called Guptakashi?” queried Raman.

“You know about Kashi or Varanasi, don’t you? That is the seat of Lord Shiva in the plains. This is Kashi’s counterpart in the hills. This is *Gupta* or secret, because, while everybody knew about the greatness of the Kashi of the plains, for centuries only the sages knew about this Kashi,” explained the Sadhu.



THE BUDDHA ON THE MARCH

(Glimpses of the
Buddha's Life - 3)



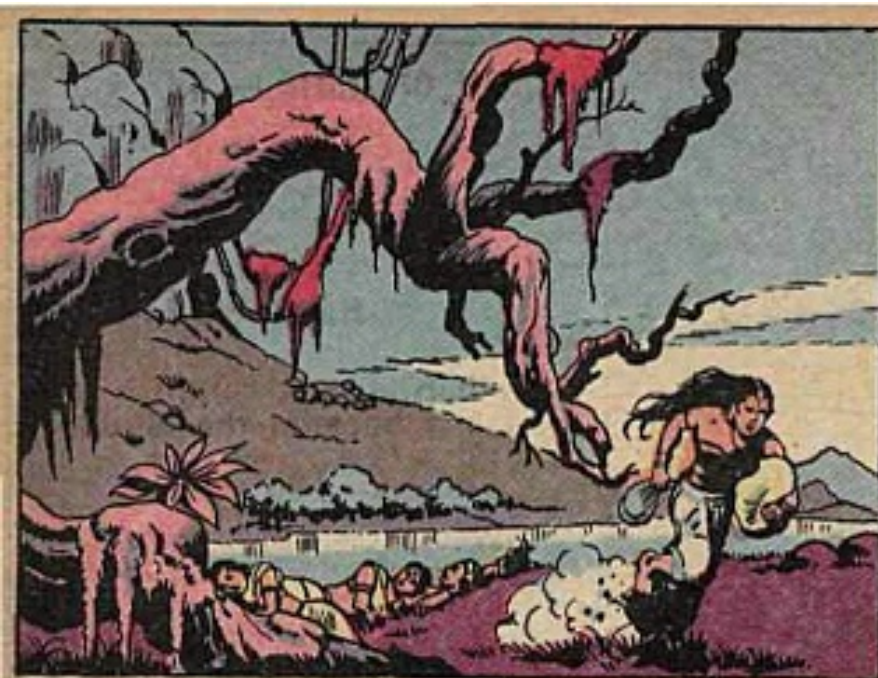
Siddhartha, through his *tapasya* became the Buddha—the Enlightened One. He was about to embrace *Nirvana*—freedom from the cycle of birth and death. But the vision of the suffering and ignorant multitudes stopped

him. He decided to bring them the light of true knowledge.

The first thing the compassionate Buddha did was to look for the five wandering ascetics who had deserted him. He found them out in a park near Varanasi. They decided to ignore him, but as he came closer, they felt overwhelmed and bowed down to him.



Yasa, the son of a wealthy man, was the next to become the Buddha's disciple. Annoyed, Yasa's father came to take his son back. Buddha made Yasa invisible for a while and talked to his father. The father too became the Buddha's disciple.



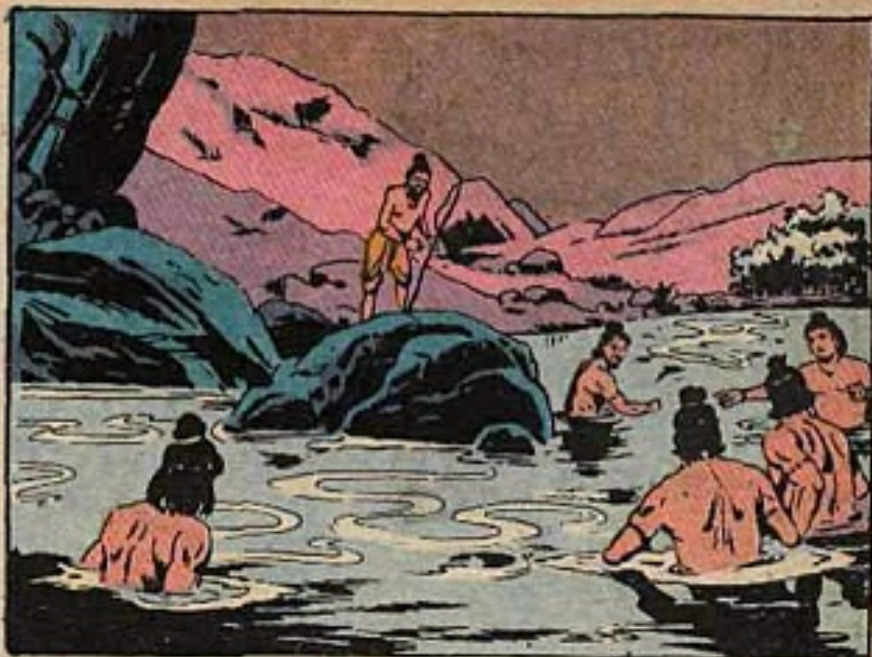
A group of wealthy young men and their wives were merrymaking beside a lake. One unmarried young man had brought with him a dancer-courtesan. When all fell asleep, the courtesan stole their valuables and fled.

On waking up, the young men ran to catch the courtesan. They met the Buddha on the way. "Have you seen a fleeing courtesan?" they asked. "What is wiser—to look for a courtesan or to look for your souls?" asked the Buddha. This gave them a jolt. They turned into the Buddha disciples.



At Uruvela lived a famous ascetic called Kassapa who had five hundred disciples. He was quite proud of his knowledge. The Buddha met him and taught him his doctrine. The old ascetic, along with his disciples, accepted the Buddha as his master.

Kassapa and his disciples cut their knotted locks and threw them into the river. Miles away, the disciples of two other famous ascetics, while bathing, saw the locks floating downstream. Curious, they came to Uruvela and stuck on to the Buddha.



The Buddha's fame spread. With numerous disciples, the Buddha reached Rajagriha. King Bimbisara received him with deep reverence and had the satisfaction of feeding him with his own hand.

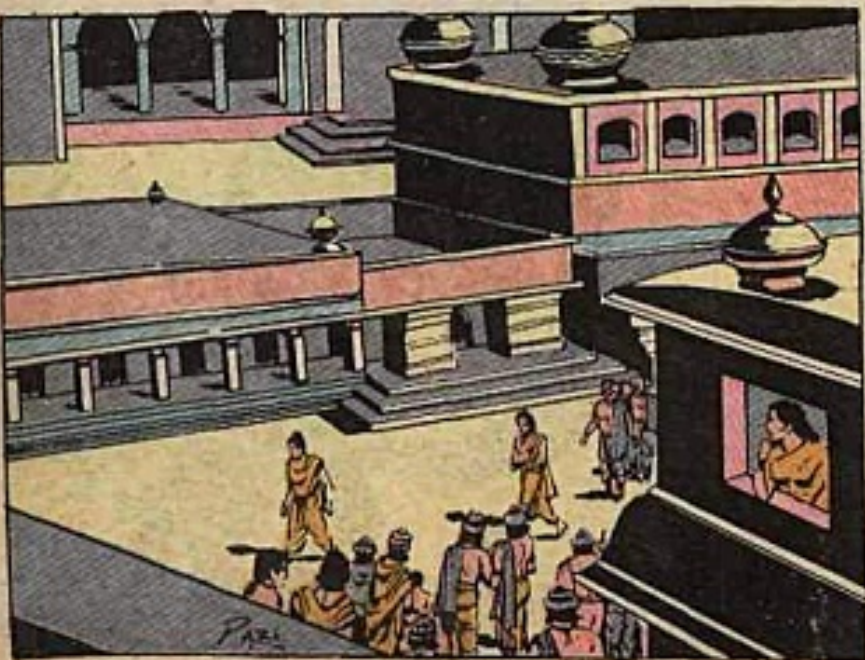
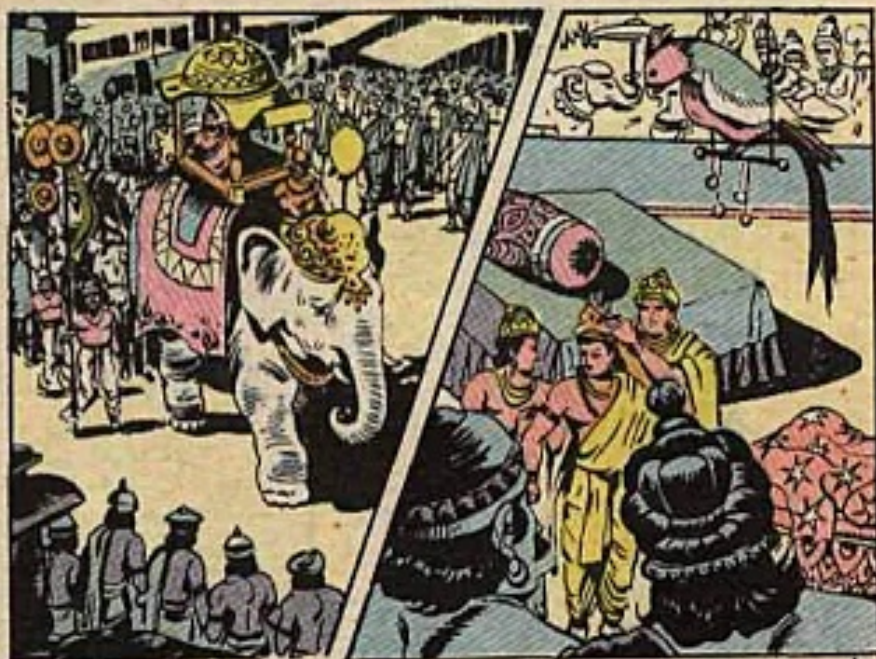
King **Suddhodana**, the Buddha's father, sent messengers inviting the Buddha to Kapilavastu. The messengers never returned to their master, for they found their new master in the Buddha. However, the Buddha came to Kapilavastu and was warmly received by his father, his stepmother and others.





All the members of the royal family went to meet the Buddha, but not his wife, Yasodhara. "If I deserve his Grace, he will come to me," said she who, indeed, was living like an ascetic herself. The Buddha did come to her, at last.

Since the Buddha had given up his right to the throne, preparations were afoot to instal his step-brother, Nanda, as the crown prince, the day he was to marry. Kapilavastu went festive. Nanda was gorgeously dressed for his marriage and coronation as crown prince.



Nanda went to the Buddha for his blessings. The Buddha made him hold his begging bowl and began walking. Nanda followed him. Nanda's young bride saw this through a window and cried. But neither Buddha took back the bowl nor Nanda could return it to him. Nanda left with the Buddha.



The Master Miser

At one end of the land lived a wealthy miser. He ate little and dressed poorly and stowed away every coin he got into his old chest.

One day he happened to hear of another miser—more miserly than himself—who lived at the other end of the land. He wanted to meet him and get from him some higher lessons in miserliness.

He set out for the distant town and met the master miser and said, "Sir! I have come from a faraway place to learn more of niggardliness. I would be grateful to you if you accept me as your disciple."

"Most welcome!" said the master miser. "I should first

entertain you to some good dishes. I must buy some food-stuff from the bazar. Let us go marketing."

Together they went to a flour mill. "Do you have good flour for making bread?" asked the master miser. "Fine indeed is my flour, my patrons, sweet as sugar," came the reply.

"Mark this, my friend, mark this. Flour is compared with sugar. Surely, sugar is better. We cannot consume more than a lump or two of sugar. That would be cheaper. So we should act wisely and go for sugar," said the master miser.

They then went to a sugar merchant and asked if he had good quality sugar. "Yes gentle-

men, we have fine quality sugar, as white as fresh butter."

"Did you hear?" the master miser asked his disciple. "Why should we not buy butter then?"

They reached a butter shop and asked if he stocked good butter. "My butter is as soft as the olive oil!" boasted the shop-keeper.

"Mark this too, my friend," said the master to his disciple. "If butter is compared to olive oil, it is because olive oil is superior. As you know, olive oil is cheaper too. Should we not go for that?"

Then they reached another shop and asked, "Have you fine quality oil?"

"Transparent and crystal clear as water," replied the oil ven-

dor.

"Did you note that? Olive oil is compared to water. Now, tell me, which is the cheaper of the two? Oil or water?" asked the master miser.

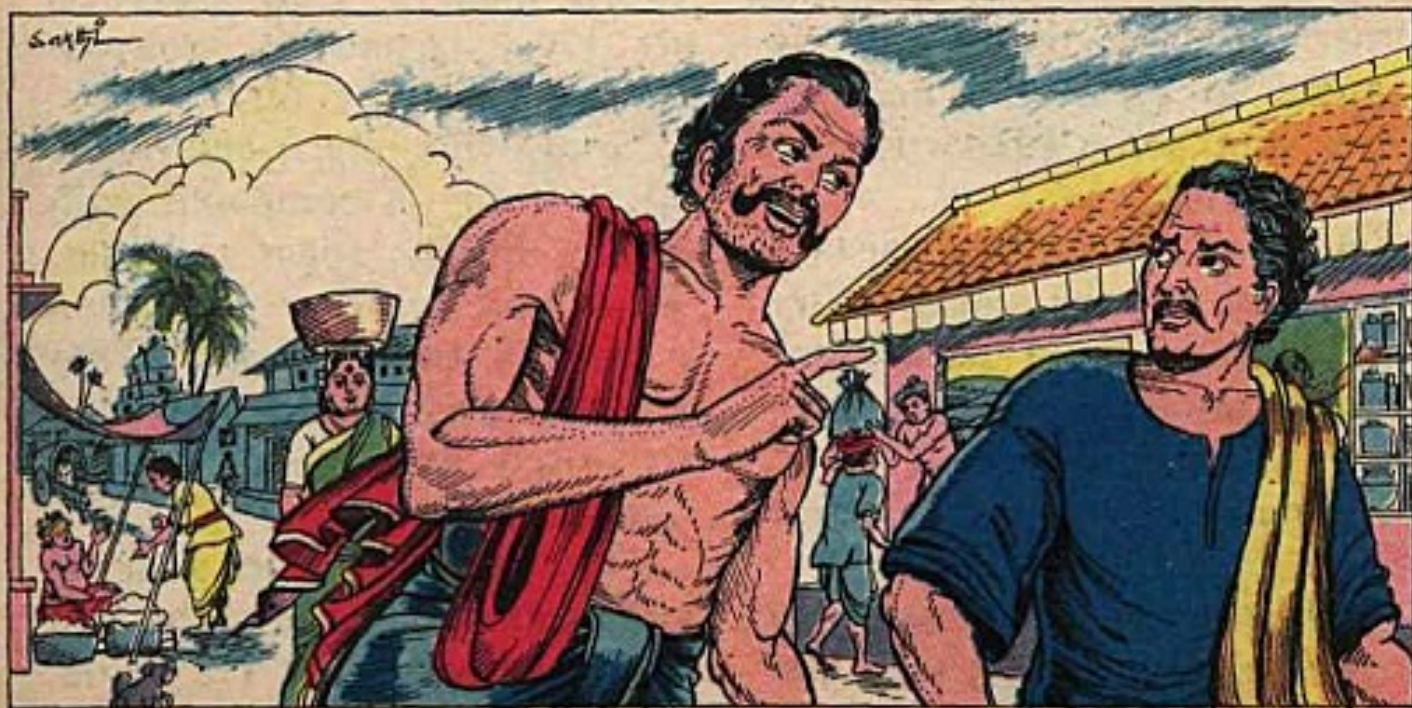
"No doubt, water," replied the apprentice.

"Excellent. Water is the best of all. I have got plenty of water at home. Now let us go and drink as many cups as we like. Isn't that the right thing to do?"

The master miser led his guest home and entertained him to a cup of water.

"How beneficial my trip proved!" exclaimed the apprentice miser as he took leave of his master, although he felt awfully hungry.

Retold by P. Raja





THE NEIGHBOURS

Maya and Leela lived side by side. Maya was quite artistic in her taste. She decorated her house beautifully, though economically.

Leela was awfully jealous of Maya. She imitated her step by step. She too devoted much of her time to decorate her house, but her motive being to surpass Maya in decoration, she spent much more than Maya.

One day her husband told her, "Do you know what the passers-by think? Pointing their fingers at our house and our neighbour's house, they comment that though our house looked gaudy, our neighbour's house looked tasteful!"

Leela was shocked. "Let us plan building a new house. Let us secure a design from an architect who is renowned for good taste," she proposed.

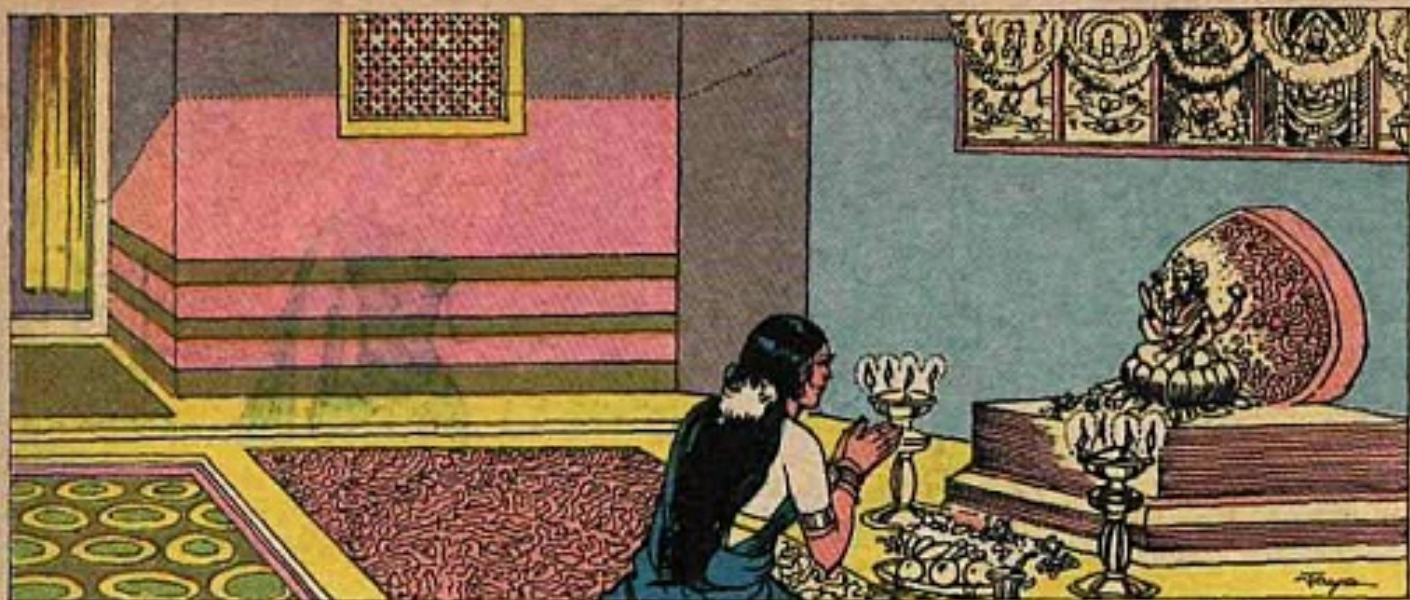
"No, this house is good enough for us. We have no means for building a new one," said her husband.

"How to stop the passers-by make such comments then?" asked Leela.

"We need not stop them. Also you need not imitate your neighbour," said her husband. To Leela he sounded rather rude. She drew a long face.

Maya and Leela had no children. Once Leela heard that Maya was going to seek the blessing of a sage. Forthwith Leela too went out to meet the sage. It so happened that both reached the sage at the same time and bowed down to him.

The sage was in a good mood. He taught them a hymn and gave them an auspicious date and said. "At the time of the sunrise recite the hymn and



prayerfully speak out your mind to the Lord. He will grant you the boon for the fulfilment of your desire."

On the particular day Maya prayed to the Lord to grant her a charming son. Leela prayed to the Lord, saying, "Let anything that happens to Maya also happen to me!"

Indeed, at the end of the year each gave birth to a charming son.

After some time Maya fell ill. The same day Leela too was struck by the same kind of illness. Two years passed. One night Maya's house was burgled. The same night Leela's house too was burgled. Whatever happened to Maya also happened to Leela.

Leela realised the folly of her attitude. Thereafter she prayed to the Lord everyday, "Let Maya enjoy peace and happiness!"

WONDER WITH COLOURS





In Search of Fear

Sumanta was a poor wood-cutter's son. He lived with his parents in a small hut. The hut was situated close to a forest. There was no other house nearby.

Sumanta's parents fell ill. He first lost his mother and then his father. His relatives who had come to attend upon his ailing parents urged upon him to leave the lone house. "Come to the village. We will look after you," they promised.

But Sumanta was in love with the forest. The brook that flowed by his house, the fresh fruits which the forest yielded to him and, above everything else, the memory of his parents

kept him attached to the hut.

"But, we are sure, fear won't let you stay here for long," commented the relatives again and again.

After they left Sumanta wondered, "What is fear? Why should it let me not stay here?" By and by he got annoyed with fear. "May what come, I must confront him," he told himself. One rainy night he went out of his hut in search of fear.

"Hello, boy! Will you mind giving me a helping hand?" a female voice asked him. He looked in all directions and saw a house covered by huge bushy trees. He entered it and met



a woman.

"My treasure hangs from the roof. I cannot reach it. If you let me stand upon your shoulders, I can bring it down," said the woman.

Sumanta knelt down and allowed the woman to step onto his shoulders. But as he stood up, he felt the load growing heavier. He also realised that the woman was trying to press him down.

In a sudden impulse he shook her off and saw that she was no longer the innocent woman she looked at first, but had grown into an ogress. She managed to get up and run for her life.

Sumanta resumed walking.

Dawn was breaking over the forest.

"Hellow, chap, where are you heading? How dare you approach our den? Even the king's sepoys avoid coming this way!" commented some bandits who sat on a rock dangling their legs.

"I am looking for fear," said Sumanta, and he asked, "Can you tell me where it is?"

The bandits looked at one another and said, "Very well, take a little flour from us and go over to that deserted burial ground. Then, sitting near that tomb, begin preparing a bread. You will soon see what fear is."

Sumanta did as advised. Suddenly a hairy hand came out of the tomb and a nasal voice asked him, "Will you give half of your bread?"

"Why not? Take it full!" said Sumanta and he calmly placed the bread on the extended palm.

The bandits who witnessed the scene from their rock, exclaimed, "Bravo, chap, why don't you join us?"

"I am in search of fear," said Sumanta and he marched ahead.

On the other side of the forest he saw a hut. He was feeling

hungry. He asked the young girl of the hut if he could get any food. Soon the girl's mother too came out. They heard his story and were amused.

Sumanta was welcomed into their hut. They cooked food for him. The girl placed a dish of freshly cooked rice before him and then, while her mother had gone out to fetch water, kept a covered earthen pot near the dish.

"There is curd inside," she said.

But as soon as Sumanta removed the cover of the pot, a bird flushed out and fluttered away.

"My God!" shrieked out Sumanta as he leaned backward.

The girl giggled.

"Were you not out to meet fear? The sensation you just now had is what is called fear. Ordinarily people would feel the sensation for an ogress, or a gang of bandits, or a ghost. But there are brave ones like you who are not afraid of them. Nevertheless, something else, even something small, could give them a taste of fear—as did this bird to you. But I must admit that you are extraordinarily brave," said the girl.

Sumanta appreciated the girl's explanation.

The girl had lost her father. She and her mother too were unwilling to leave the forest. Sumanta soon grew dear to them. He married the girl and they lived happily.



ONE WHO DESERVED MORE

Thimmarasu, the renowned minister of the King of Vijayanagar, had two young men, Subodh and Vimal, as his personal assistants. He trusted and loved both of them; every year he increased their monthly salary by twenty mohurs.

One year he increased Subodh's salary by forty mohurs while Vimal's increment remained the usual twenty.

"What have I done to 'deserve this kindness, Sir?" asked Subodh.

"You are paid more because you are in the habit of spending more in charity," answered the noble minister.

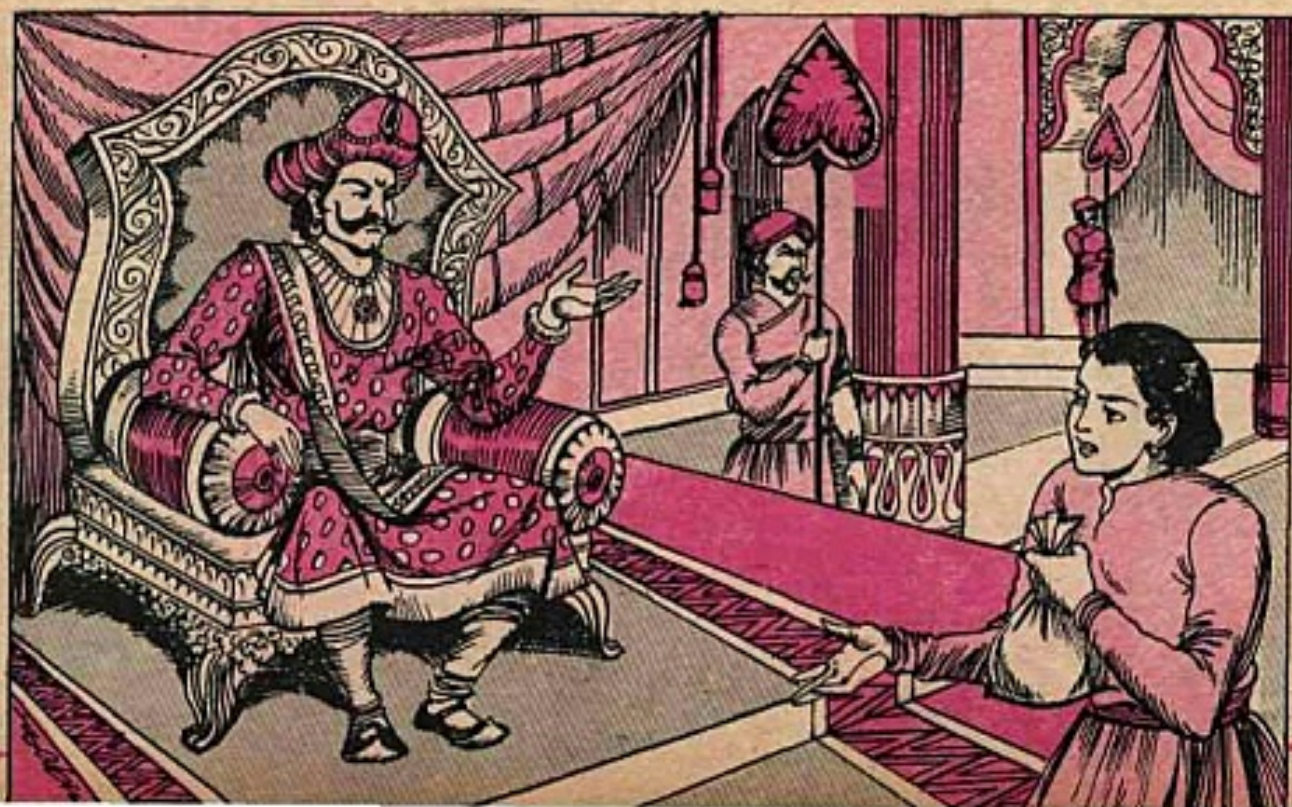
"May I know what gave you that impression, Sir?" queried Subodh.

"Did a traveller not meet you a week back, at night, and ask for shelter, saying that he had lost his purse and was not in a position to pay for his lodging at the inn?"

"That is right, Sir," said Subodh.

"In the morning did you not offer him some money for his expense on the way since he had lost his purse? Well, on another occasion Vimal too had granted him shelter, but he had not been so considerate as to think of his passage-money," said the minister with a smile.

Soon the surprised Subodh realised who the traveller was!



A SEASON IN HELL

Dark was the night and fearful the atmosphere. The rain was punctuated by thunders. Flashes of lightning revealed weird faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the old tree again and brought down the corpse. But as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying astride on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke out, "O King, mythology informs us about people who have gone to heaven while alive; but I know of two persons who spent years in the domain of vampires. Let me narrate their story to you. That might bring you some relief."

The vampire went on: In a small village lived Kusum, a charming young girl, with her mother. Her father had died. Her mother worked in several households to earn enough to sustain the girl and herself. She





evening. They entered a village that looked prosperous. Kusum tapped on a door and drew the attention of the woman who owned the house. Her name was Sandhya Devi.

"Can we take shelter on your veranda?" asked Kusum politely.

Sandhya Devi took an instant liking for Kusum. "Why on veranda? Come in," she said. She fed the two guests and listened to their story. "If this is your mission, you are welcome to stay here. You will assist me in managing my house. Your mother will not be required to work at all," she told Kusum.

Kusum happily agreed to the proposal. Soon she learnt all about Sandhya Devi's misfortune. Her husband had become an ascetic and gone away to the hills. Her only child, a young son, had disappeared! Nobody knew whether he was dead or alive.

Six months passed. Sandhya Devi had gone over to a relative's house. Kusum's sick mother was in her room. It was a moonlit night. The servants had retired. Kusum felt the need of some water and went to the well at the back-

worked hard and in the process ruined her health.

Kusum was now grown-up. One day she told her, "Mother, at this rate you would invite an untimely death. It is time you had some rest."

Kusum then proposed that they should leave their village and take refuge in some nobleman's family. Kusum would serve the family on condition that both of them would be looked after by the family, and her mother won't have to work at all.

Kusum's mother had to yield to her suggestion. They left their hut and walked till it was

yard of the house.

Suddenly a young man approached her, asking, "Well, who are you?"

Kusum, a little surprised, asked in return, "But who are you?"

"I am Vasant, the lost son of this house," replied the young man.

Kusum was going to shriek out when the young man said, "Do not be afraid of me. I'm no ghost." Then he narrated his strange story. He was practising some black magic, unknown to others. In the process, he happened to offend some vampires. They whisked

him away to their domain, in hell. Nine years have passed. He would win his freedom from the vampire in another year. But he had an awful time there. He yearned to talk to a human being. That is why he sneaked out once in a while. But such was the curse on him that he would become the prisoner of the vampires for yet another ten years if by chance he would touch or talk to his mother.

Kusum felt moved. "Can I help you in any way?" she asked. "I'd love to have your company from time to time. But I can enter only the room which I used to occupy and





which my mother has kept unused under lock. Can't you go to live in that room?"

"I'll try," said Kusum.

When Sandhya Devi returned, Kusum, under some plea, requested her to let her use the locked room.

By then Sandhya Devi had come to look upon Kusum as her daughter. She thought that her son's room cannot remain unused forever, after all. With a sigh, she opened it for Kusum.

Kusum lay down on Vasant's cosy bed. A little after midnight Vasant entered the room and spent an hour talking to Kusum. Thereafter he visited

Kusum every night and secretly married her.

Kusum became pregnant. Sandhya Devi was puzzled. But kusum told her, "Have patience for a few months. Your shock will turn into the joy of your life." To Sandhya Devi this sounded like a riddle. But she had a great faith in Kusum. She felt that there might be something mysterious in her conduct, but she was not a bad girl.

Soon Kusum gave birth to a son. But Sandhya Devi could not keep her curiosity suppressed. One night she peeped through a hole and saw a young man talking to Kusum. Was he her son? Was he alive? What keeps him in hiding? She could neither sleep nor take food, worrying on these questions.

Next day, early in the night, two servants deposited a large wooden chest in Kusum's room. Kusum could not have imagined that the chest contained Sandhya Devi!

At midnight Vasant stepped into the room. No sooner had he done so than Sandhya Devi sprang out and embraced him. "Why are you hiding from me, my child?" she cried out with great anguish as well as love.

Kusum stood scared. Vasant freed himself from his mother and said, "Mother, only after an hour I would have been free from my bondage to the vampires. But what did you do! I have to serve them for ten more years for your touching me!"

"Let me see how the vampires take you! I shall rather give my life than let them enter the room," declared Sandhya Devi and she stood guard at the entrance of the room.

Nevertheless, the vampires managed to enter the room, unseen by her, and demanded another decade's servitude from Vasant.

"Only if I could be sure that my sick mother and my son would be looked after well, I could go to the domain of the vampires on your behalf," said Kusum.

"I promise to take the best possible care of your mother and our son," said Vasant.

The vampires agreed to this arrangement. They allowed Kusum to kiss her infant son before whisking her away.

Life in the domain of vampires proved extremely painful to Kusum. The vampires never let her sneak out. Her only solace was, she had saved Vasant ten years of torture. Often she





felt a great eagerness to see her son, but she could do nothing about it.

Ten years passed. The vampires brought Kusum out of their domain and left her in front of her husband's house.

Kusum saw the atmosphere festive. By and by she understood that a marriage was going to be performed. But imagine her surprise when she realised that the bridegroom was none other than her husband!

She mingled with the crowd and found out that her mother was no more. Her son had grown into a bright boy and was distributing alms to the

poor on the occasion of his father's marriage.

Vasant and Sandhya Devi saw Kusum, but they could not recognise her. Kusum tarried for a while, gazing at her son, and then went away for some unknown destination.

The vampire paused for a moment and then challenged King Vikram, "O King, how to explain Kusum's conduct? Why at all in the first place did she propose to take Vasant's place in the domain of vampires? Obviously because she loved Vasant very much. If so, why did she not introduce herself and stop Vasant from marrying again? Answer me, O King, if you can. If you keep mum despite your ability to answer, your head would roll off your shoulders!"

Forthwith said King Vikram:

The answer lies in the peculiarity of Kusum's character. She was unable to bear others' suffering. She had been out in search of work in order to keep her mother in a little comfort. There is nothing to suggest that she had developed any deep love for Vasant. She had secretly married him under unusual conditions. It is in order to relieve Vasant and his mother



of their agony that she proposed to go over to the world of vampires.

"Had Vasant nursed any deep love for Kusum, he would not have allowed her to be punished in his place. He had married Kusum in order to have a human companion in his painful life.

"Kusum felt anxious on account of her mother and her son. Her mother had expired. She found her son quite happy.

If Vasant thought that he would be happy by marrying again, why should she stand in his way? It was against her nature to create problems for others. She had known untold hardship in the domain of vampires. She was confident of her ability to pull on with hardship. Thus she departed."

No sooner had the king concluded his answer than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.



We act as though comfort and luxury were the Chief requirements of life, when all that we need to make us really happy is something to be enthusiastic about.

—Charles Kingsley

THE GLITTERING GLASS

Ramprasad, the goldsmith, observed that his neighbour, Ravindra, was visiting the moneylender's house again and again.

"What's the matter?" he asked Ravindra.

"Brother, the moneylender had promised to give me a loan. Accordingly I arranged for my daughter's marriage to take place next week. Now he keeps on refusing me the loan under some pretext or the other," said Ravindra.

Ramprasad knew the moneylender well enough to understand that he was keeping Ravindra on tenter-hooks deliberately. At the last moment he will charge a high interest. Ravindra will be obliged to agree to it.

Ramprasad handed over four coloured glass pieces to Ravindra and told him what he should do.

Ravindra met the moneylender privately and said, "I found these stones in a buried pot. Maybe, these are valuable. Will you keep these with you till my daughter's marriage is over?"

The moneylender accepted them and, at night, went to the goldsmith and asked him what they could be.

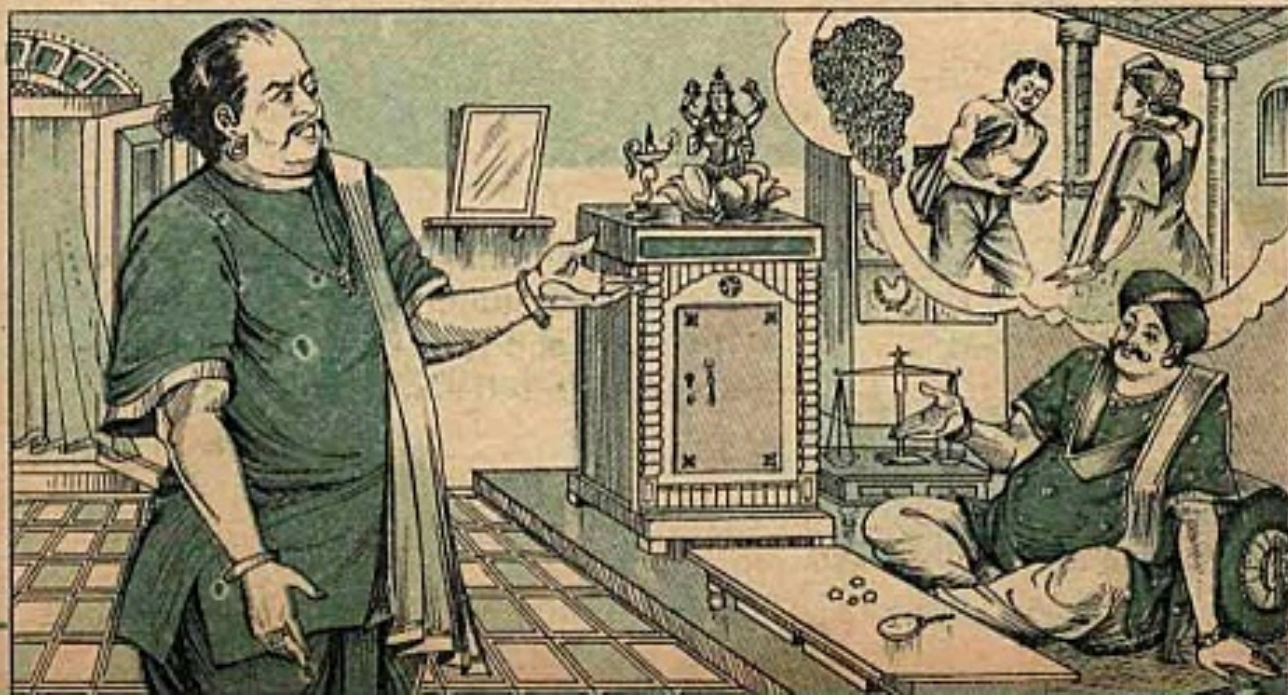
"Could be diamonds, I'm not sure. I don't have the right means to examine them just now. Bring them to me a fortnight later," said Ramprasad.

The moneylender was pleased to give the necessary loan to Ravindra the very next day at a nominal interest.

After the marriage, Ravindra came to take back his property. The moneylender gave him a different set of glass pieces, pleased that he had cheated Ravindra of his diamonds!

A fortnight passed. The moneylender took the glass pieces again to Ramprasad.

"Oh, these are only glass pieces – not of a paisa's worth!" said Ramprasad.





LEGENDS AND PARABLES OF INDIA

The Thief and the Farmer

A young farmer bought two bullocks from a cattle-market. It was night when he was back in his village.

Early in the morning he fed his bullocks and led them to his field that was outside the village. After ploughing the field for two hours, he released them from the yoke so that they could graze and himself sat down under a tree for rest. He fell asleep.

A thief happened to pass by. When he saw the young man asleep, he led the handsome bullocks away with him.

But the farmer woke up before the thief had gone out of

his sight. He ran at great speed and caught hold of the thief when the latter was entering another village.

"How dare you walk away with my bullocks?" he demanded of the thief.

"What nonsense do you speak! It is only last evening that I bought these from the cattle-market! Don't you try to be so clever!" retorted the thief.

But the farmer won't let himself be cheated of his precious bullocks so easily. He had spent years of his saving in buying them. He grabbed the thief and began shouting.

Soon a crowd gathered

around the two quarrelling men and the bullocks. Some of the elderly men asked the farmer if he can bring witnesses from his village who would identify the bullocks as his. But the farmer had bought the bullocks only on the previous day and had reached the village at night. How could anybody have seen him with the bullocks?

The crowd did not know how to decide the case. The senior members of the crowd led the two men and the bullocks to the house of a physician who was known to be a very wise man. In fact, he was none other than Bodhisattva—the Buddha in one

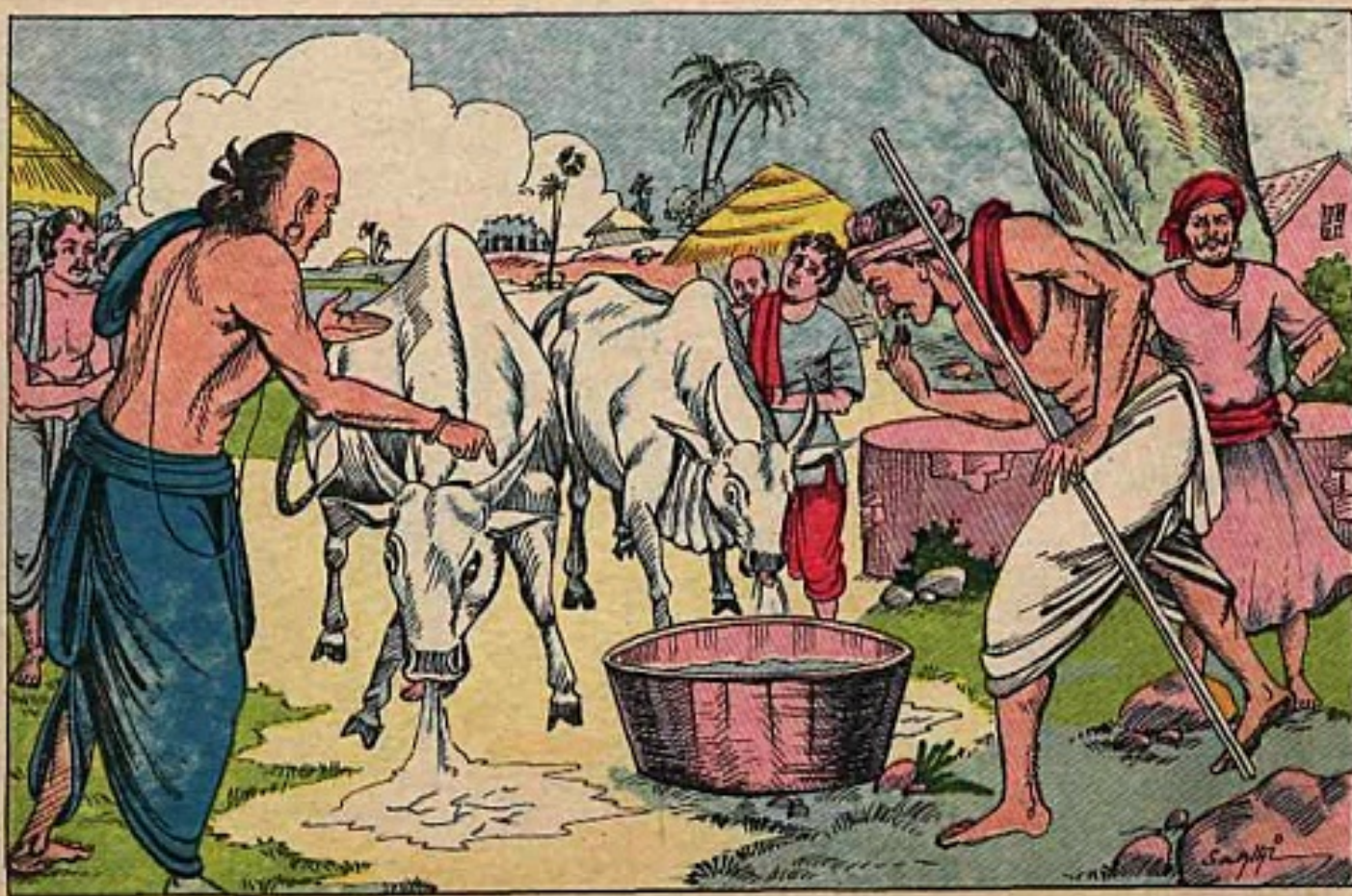
of his earlier incarnations.

He looked at the two contenders and instinctively knew who between them was the liar. However, he asked the thief, "With what did you feed your bullocks this morning?"

"Well with boiled rice and two pumpkins," replied the thief. Bodhisattva looked at the farmer and asked, "If these bullocks are yours, with what did you feed them this morning?"

"I'm a poor man. How can I offer rice and pumpkins to my bullocks? I fed them with grass," replied the farmer.

Bodhisattva nodded. The



crowd waited with curiosity to see what the celebrated physician would do.

Bodhisattva ground a certain dry root and mixed the powder with water and let the bullocks drink it. Because of the medicinal effect of the water, the bullocks vomitted out a part of what they had had for food. What came out was half-digested grass!

The crowd applauded the clever way in which the physician proved who was the bullocks' true master. The thief grew pale and confessed to his having stolen the bullocks.

"Never in your life do such a

thing again," Bodhisattva warned him. The farmer went away to his village with his bullocks. The thief had hardly taken to the road when the crowd pounced upon him and began beating him. But Bodhisattva came to his rescue. The crowd released the thief at Bodhisattva's bidding.

"The beating you got was only the physical consequence of your deed. There are other consequences which you have to suffer either in this life or after death. Should you not mend your ways?" Bodhisattva asked.

The thief promised to lead an honest life.

From the Buddha Jatakas.





You have read about the brave leaders of the great uprising that took place in 1857, famous as the Sepoy Mutiny. They are Rani Lakshmibai, Nana Sahib, Tantia Tope and Kumar Singh.

But there were many other fighters whose identities will never be known. We get numerous accounts of their heroic sacrifices from the books written by the Englishmen whom they were fighting.

Let us remember two instances. These are narrated by an English Sergeant, William Forbes-Mitchell, in his *Reminiscences of the Great Mutiny*.

Those were days when the

**They Fought for
Freedom — 7**

THE UNKNOWN LOT OF 1857

Mutiny was coming to an end. The soldiers of the East India Company had become more brutal than the army of Chenghiz Khan. They set fire to the villages through which they passed. They hanged or shot dead thousands of innocent people.

Once a party of the Company's soldiers, on their rampageous march through villages, saw a mendicant sitting on a leopard skin, counting his rosary of beads. His forehead was smeared with ashes and vermilion.

One of the officers called the mendicant "a painted scoundrel" and was eager to try his bayonet on him. However, another officer stopped him from doing so.

They were just passing him when the mendicant whipped out a gun and shot at the party, killing some of the officers before being cut down himself.

The mendicant, no doubt,

knew that he would be killed. He sat ready for that. Probably he was one of those people whose kinsmen had been killed by the Company. He had been determined to avenge their death before dying himself.

One hot noon the Sergeant's men were extremely thirsty. By then the fightings had been over, they were roaming places slaughtering people in cold blood. That day they had killed only two thousand Indians! They entered a desolate park near Lucknow. At the foot of a bushy tree they saw some jars of water. Without bothering to know who had deposited them, they crowded around them.

And they began sprawling on the ground with death cries. It took some time for the other soldiers who had not gone near the tree to understand that someone shot them dead. The bullets came from the tree-top.

Soon they spotted the hidden enemy perched on a branch, covered by thick foliage. An English soldier shot the enemy down.

The enemy who tumbled to the ground was found to be a young lady!

May be, she was a girl from a noble family that had been destroyed by the Company. Obviously, she had planned her revenge with a readiness to die herself!





THE SAGA OF SHIVA

Long long ago, there was a sage named Mrikanda. He and his wife once undertook a journey to various holy places of India. While at Kedarnath, in the Himalayas, they prayed to Lord Shiva, "O Lord, grant us a worthy son—one who would uphold the prestige of the sages and himself become a man of truth."

In the silence of the region both had a feeling that their prayer had been heard and granted. They felt peace at heart and returned home.

Indeed, a charming child was born unto them. They named him Markandeya. As they sat rejoicing over the event, out of the dark clouds said a voice, "The son you have been blessed with is to live only for twelve years!"

Needless to say, the prophecy plunged Mrikanda and his wife into gloom. However, they tried their best to forget all about it. The charming child continued growing up before their loving eyes and began learning various lores at an incredible speed. At eleven he was well-versed in scriptures and could satisfy even grown-up seekers with his wise words.

But then the prophecy began haunting his parents. They could not stop shedding tears whenever their eyes fell on their boy. One day Markandeya insisted on knowing the cause of their sorrow. Mrikanda tried to avoid answering him, but finally had to come out with the truth.

Markandeya smiled. "We all are devotees of Lord Shiva.

Nothing can happen to us without his sanction. If I am destined to die after a year the Lord alone can change the destiny, if he so pleases. Since you are so anxious about it, allow me to go over to some lonely place and meditate on Shiva. I am sure, only the best will happen to me."

It so happened that Narada, the celestial sage, reached Mrikanda's hermitage when the dialogue between the father and the son was going on. He encouraged Markandeya in his mission and advised him to proceed to the bank of the river Gautami. He told him further

where he can find a symbol of Lord Shiva.

Markandeya found the spot described by Narada and began his askesis.

In the meanwhile Narada met Yama, the God of Death, and told him, "A young sage, Markandeya, is going to defy you by the power of his askesis. I wait to see who wins, you the mighty God or Markandeya the little sage."

Yama was surprised at the report. He concentrated and found out that Markandeya was to die soon. At the right moment Yama's assistants approached the bank of the Gautami.



But they could not go close to Markandeya. A supernatural light was around him. Yama's messengers could not penetrate it however hard they tried.

Yama was unhappy to see his assistants returning empty handed. He proceeded forthwith to the river-bank and saw the luminous boy-sage lost in trance, locking the symbol of Shiva by his arms. Yama hesitated for a moment, but he decided to act according to his law. He threw a noose to capture Markandeya. But the noose got fastened around Shiva's symbol. As soon as Yama pulled the noose, there was a dazzling

flash out of which Shiva emerged.

Yama shivered before the stern gaze of Shiva and he ran away. Shiva then lifted up Markandeya and told him, "By becoming one with me in your consciousness at the moment when you were fated to die, you have successfully tided over your fate. You have a new lease of life from now. Go back to your parents and live a wise and happy life!"

Untold was the joy of Markandeya's parents and the other sages when they saw the young sage returning—his face beaming with a serene joy.



A CAUTIOUS MOVE

One night Shantilal, the shop-keeper, returned home late. A play was being performed in front of his house. His wife stood on one end of their verandah enjoying the play.

Shantilal understood that taking advantage of the situation a thief had entered his house and was hiding in the luggage space under the roof. If he would shout "Thief!" the thief might attack him with a dagger—as thieves often did.

His wife came in. Said Shantilal, "I hear that a gang of thieves have come to our town. Bring your ornament-box. I shall hide it."

His wife brought the box. The thief, naturally, remained quiet, happily waiting to see where they would hide the box.

Shantilal opened the box and cried out, "A snake inside the box! A snake!"

From the crowd outside his house a number of people came in rushing

"Now that you are here, let us take hold of the thief," said Shantilal.

The thief was captured without much difficulty.



The Double-Headed Men



In days gone by, in a certain village lived a weaver named Mantharaka. One day his old loom got broken.

He decided to make a new loom and spent many hours in the forest looking for a tree that would yield him good wood.

At last he chose an old tree that looked excellent and raised his axe to begin cutting it. There was a flash of light. A luminous face popped out of the tree-trunk. "I am the goddess of this forest. This tree is my dwelling. Spare this and choose another," said the figure.

"It is hard to find another

tree of this quality!" murmured Mantharaka.

"Why don't you do something wiser? It seems you toil hard to make two ends meet. Why don't you ask me for a boon that would make your life easy?" asked the goddess.

Mantharaka was delighted. "I shall meet you again soon," he said and he returned to his village. He meant to consult others as he knew that he was rather dull in mind.

Before reaching his home he met his neighbour, a friend as well as a clever man.

"You look so thoughtful!" observed the good-hearted neighbour. He knew that Mantharaka was never known for his capacity to think.

Mantharaka told the neighbour all about the goddess's offer to grant him a boon. The neighbour was excited. "My friend, this is a golden opportunity. Ask the goddess to give

you a kingdom. You will be the king and enjoy all the best things of life. As your minister I shall manage the kingdom," proposed the neighbour.

"That is a good idea. I'm sure my wife will endorse it," said Mantharaka.

"Don't say you are going to consult your wife!" shrieked out the neighbour. "You know how much she hates me. And, frankly, while you do not think at all, she always thinks in a crooked way."

Nevertheless, Mantharaka told about the goddess's offer and the neighbour's suggestion to his wife.

The wife who was overjoyed with the goddess's offer, turned red with wrath at the neighbour's suggestion. "His suggestion, whatever that be, would bring you ruin. He wants you to become a king so that he can become your minister," she shouted.

"For what boon should I go then?" asked Mantharaka.

"You work with one head and two hands. If you get another head and a pair of extra hands, you can produce twice. Our income will be doubled. This should do for the moment. Now that you have traced the goddess, you can always





scare her by raising your axe to fell the tree. She will grant you more boons," said the wife.

"How clever of you!" Mantharaka complimented his wife.

Straight he went to the forest and asked the goddess for the boon of an extra head and an extra pair of hands. The prayer was instantly granted.

Mantharaka at first felt rather awkward. But soon he felt quite proud at his queer achievement. "The villagers will be awe-struck and impressed with

my form!" he told himself.

It was evening when he was back in his village. The first to see him was a woman who gave out a shriek and fainted right away. The next to see him was a man who cried, "A ghoul, a demon in our village! Hey ho!"

A hundred people came rushing to the street. They began beating Mantharaka with so many sticks that he could not ward them off even with his four hands. He died soon.



TO DEATH — WITH A SMILE

In the early years of the 6th century B.C. a great philosopher roamed the streets of Athens. Some took him for a crazy fellow; but there were others who looked upon him as the wisest of men. He was Socrates.

All he did was to talk to the young men and make them think. His mission was to free them from prejudices and blind dogmas.

But there were many who did not wish young men to think freely. Socrates was accused of corrupting the youth. A bench of 501 judges pronounced him guilty by a majority of 60. He could have been let off with a fine, but they chose to condemn him to death.

His disciples and admirers surrounded him—all in tears—as the smiling Socrates drank a cup of poison, called hemlock, saying, "Death is, either a state of nothingness or a change of the soul from this world to another.....The hour of departure has come; we go our ways, I to die, you to live. God only knows which is better."

Thus did the little men put an end to one of the intellectual giants of all times.





LET US KNOW

***What is the Eightfold path preached by the Buddha?
Who was the author of the Jataka tales?***

Nem Chandra, Varanasi.

Right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration - these constitute the Eightfold Path.

The Jataka tales number 547. They are, as you might have observed while reading them in the *Chandamama*, tales about the numerous incarnations of the soul that finally manifested as the Buddha. Most probably the Buddha himself narrated some of them and more were added later by his disciples. It is not possible to find the names of these disciples.

The Jataka tales were originally written in Pali. They were translated into Sinhalese. The Pali version was lost. The tales were translated into Sanskrit from Sinhalese.

Many of these tales are likely to have been in circulation prior to the Buddha. With some variations they were retold by the Buddhists. There is a Jataka tale called the Dasharatha-Jataka which was evidently borrowed from the *Ramayana*.

(Readers are welcome to send such queries on culture, literature or general knowledge which should be of interest to others too, for brief answers from the Chandamama.)

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Mr P. Sundaram



Mr. B. Bhanasali

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs .25/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The prize for the May '80 goes to:
Master R. V. Ravi, 1317 Jangli Maharaj Road,
Opp. Modern High School, Poona 411 005.

The Winning Entry: 'None to Share' - 'One to Stare'



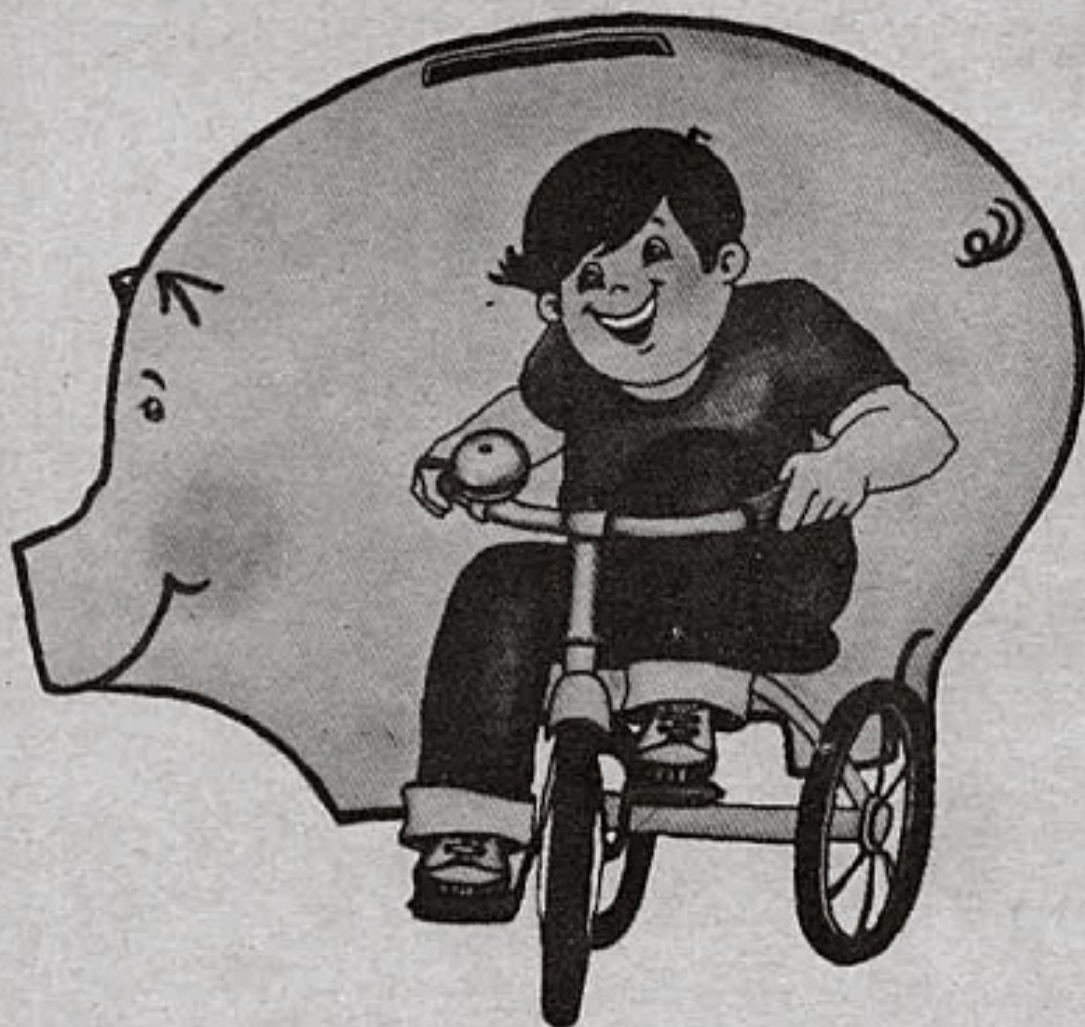
PICKS FROM
OUR MAIL BAG

Dear Sir,

Kudos to you for introducing the new feature, *World Mythology*, through pictures. As a college teacher, my suggestion is, you should cover, along with other stories, such stories which the students ought to know in order to appreciate English literature. For example, Shelley's most brilliant poem is called *Adonais*, after a Greek mythological character, Adonis. If the story of Adonis is given to the children they will appreciate Shelley's poem better.

S. A. Ahad, New Delhi

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